

5000 West



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Public Law 105-368 authorizes VA to provide combat veterans cost-free care for conditions potentially related to their combat service for up to two years following their discharge or release from active duty. That law, passed by the Congress and signed by the President on Veterans Day of 1998, was in part the genesis of the seamless transition advisory board at the Medical Center. The group, of many disciplines, met for the first time last week to discuss the effectiveness of Medical Center initiatives to members of the armed forces returning from Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom and the global war on terrorism.

Jean Bromley, who coordinates VISN OEF/OIF activities, is co-chair of the advisory board with Helen Bolgrien. Both are points of contact for OEF/OIF veterans. "The purpose of the board is to enhance current care and provide support for future initiatives," said Mrs. Bromley. The group meets monthly and reports to the medical center director.

Another initiative, began in September of last year, is outreach. Andy Hendrickson, RN, and Eric Proescher, PsyD, who are OEF/OIF veterans and members of the advisory board, are becoming better known throughout the state in their roles as leading the Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran and family outreach efforts. The goal is to reach out to the returning military veterans and their families to facilitate the healthy transition from deployment to normal civilian life. The team, one of 30 in VA medical centers

REACHING



On the Road – Andy Hendrickson, RN, and Eric Proescher, PsyD, are visiting many places in Wisconsin and Illinois they have only heard of and some they have never heard of. The team represents the Medical Center's traveling outreach effort to spread the word on post deployment services as our armed forces return home. Besides a PowerPoint presentation, they have a plethora of resources for veterans and their families. And, they speak just about anywhere. For further information, call 888 469-6614, extension 42442.

nationwide, acts as a proactive resource working with other governmental agencies as an advocate for the returning servicemen and women.

"There are many available resources out there," said Dr. Proescher. "People are trying to do it differently, but there is still a disconnect between those who need services and then navigating the system to get all the resources that are available." He said that their goal is to make the changeover from combat as seamless as possible utilizing all the tools available.

Mr. Hendrickson likes to think of their positions as ombudsmen for the returning military in their change to being home. "We're a work in progress," he said noting past responses to the varied needs.

Both spend a lot of time on the road and work many evenings and weekends sharing

information about benefits and readjustment. They speak to a wide variety of audiences including members of support groups and units going or returning from duty overseas. Their catchment area includes the counties in east central and southeastern Wisconsin, but it is actually broader as local members of the armed forces are assigned to units all over the Midwest.

The outreach team offers several programs; one is titled Understanding Readjustment for Recent Military Service Veterans and Their Families. "It focuses on service members returning to home life and understanding the changes that occurred while gone," said Dr. Proescher.

The outreach initiative is funded for three years. Education and research are also connected with their efforts and includes evaluation.

Dr. Sobczak honored

Ken Sobczak, DDS, was surprised at the recognition. Quietly last fall, he interrupted a western hunting trip, boarded a plane to California and graciously accepted the President's Award of the American College of Prosthodontists.

The award is recognition by his peers of outstanding vision and leadership to the welfare, education and advancement of the College and to the specialty of prosthodontics.

Dr. Sobczak is a VA dentist, and more importantly; a good one. He has been at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center going on some 30 years, which does not include his general practice residency training in 1973 – the year he graduated from the dental school at Marquette University. He then completed prosthodontic training at the VA Medical Center in Wilmington, Delaware and a master of science degree in oral biology at Temple University.

The American Dental Association defines prosthodontics as a dental specialty in the restoration and replacement of teeth and oral structures. Extensive training and experience provide prosthodontists with a special understanding of the dynamics of a smile and the creation of tooth replacements.

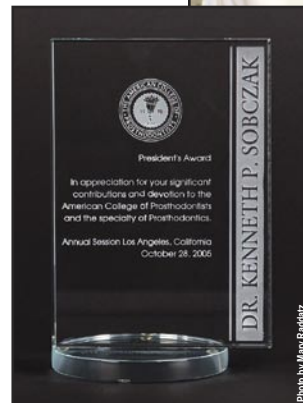
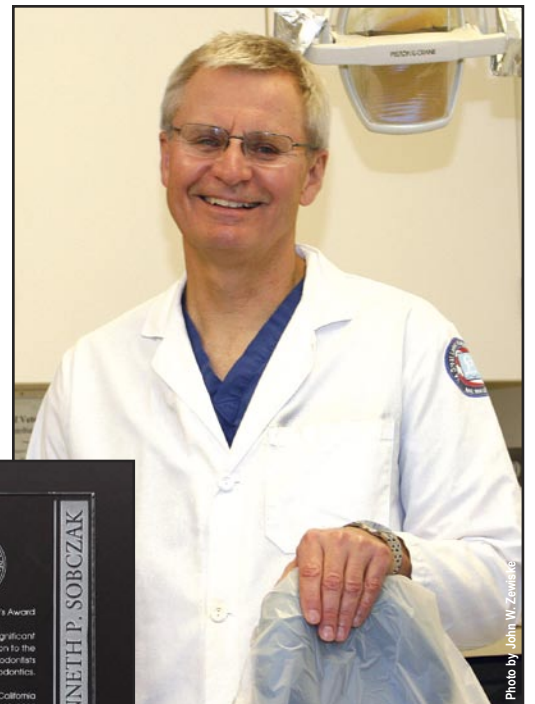
The honor is important to Dr. Sobczak. However, he would rather talk of those who made it happen – his residents – while the program director of prosthodontics at the Medical Center. That is where the pride shows. The love of teaching and his former residents are paramount in his career.

Patrick Lloyd, DDS, former coordinator of the VA national geriatric dental program based at the Medical Center and now dean of the School of Dentistry at the University of Minnesota, nominated him for the prestigious award.

Dr. Sobczak directed the prosthodontic residency here for 22 years and has been on the faculty of Marquette University School of Dentistry for 29 years. Many of his past residents were in the audience and joined in giving him a standing ovation after his acceptance remarks. In those remarks, Dr. Sobczak contended he was "...part of a process: the process of transferring knowledge and experience from one generation to the next. I am not unique. I represent a group of men and women who direct prosthodontic training programs. Being a prosthodontic program director can be difficult and frustrating, and it can be exhilarating and incredibly rewarding."

That evening, hundreds of miles from the Medical Center, he was "officially" rewarded. But actually, he said his biggest reward was the privilege of treating "...deserving patients. Veterans who paid for their treatment with an arm or a leg, with months and even years in internment camps or with neurohormonal or limbic system changes caused by the sheer terror and unspeakable horrors of wars fought in service to this country."

You see the good dentist is rewarded every day by his patients. It may be subtle and without applause, but it makes his day. He freely admits, "If I had a chance to do it over again, I wouldn't change a thing."



Kenneth P. Sobczak, DDS, received the President's Award in Los Angeles in October of last year. The award recognized his "...significant contributions and devotion to American College of Prosthodontists and the specialty of Prosthodontics."

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The community relations office publishes *5000 West* as a channel of communication for employees, volunteers, patients and friends. *5000 West* is committed to enhancing the image of the Medical Center and its employees and volunteers through information, recognition and entertainment.

Articles of interest are welcome. The editor reserves the right to use and edit contributed stories. Submission deadline is two days prior to publication. Your comments are encouraged and should be directed to editor (00Z) 5000 West, VA Medical Center, Milwaukee, WI 53295: telephone (414) 382-5363 or (888) 469-6614, extension 45363 or e-mail john.zewiske@med.va.gov

Glen W. Grippen
Medical Center Director

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briefs

It's here! The 2006 Medical College of Wisconsin Faculty/Staff Telephone Directory is now available in the voluntary service office (room 70-C-16). The supply is limited, so come early.

A nice touch. Visit Milwaukee (formerly the Milwaukee Convention and Visitors Bureau) has awarded the Medical Center the *Standing Ovation Award* for bringing the 2007 National Veterans Wheelchair Games to the city. The columnar trophy is displayed in the games display case off the first floor south lobby.

After 29 years of service at the Medical Center, Joanne M. Krumberger, RN, has accepted the associate director position at the VA Northern California Health Care System in Martinez, CA. A reception will be held on Thursday, March 16 in room 3435 (B-312) from 1:30-3:30 p.m. All are invited to wish her farewell.

Thank you to Coach Neil Doese and the members of the U.S. Women's Curling Team for bringing the Winter Games "up close and personal." Coach Doese's wife, Gail, and one of his sons, Rich, work at the Medical Center. According to USolympicteam.com "curling" was as high as third on the MSN.com search engine during the week behind "Dick Cheney" and "assassin spider."